

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Independent claims 1, 8 and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by Van de Steeg, No. 5,479,618. The Van de Steeg patent is directed to a motion control I/O module that is adapted to be loaded with configuration data across an isolation interface that isolates the 5 volt logic level signals on the controller side from the 120-volt AC or 24-volt DC signals on the machine side. In other words, the I/O module is adapted to control the movement of a machine via an axis servo drive 20 and receive position feedback information via an encoder device 21. Specific motion control programs are developed using the programming terminal of the I/O module and then loaded into the program RAM 44 within the I/O module. To change the operation of the I/O module, the PROM memory which stores the configuration data for the module must be replaced (col. 2, lines 16-19).

The process module according to the present invention includes a controller having a program data administrator unit that contains data indicating the location of the program control unit that executes the process control program for controlling the operation of the process module. In addition, the data administrator unit coordinates the transfer of the process control program from the program data memory into the program control unit in accordance with the data contained in the program data administrator unit so that the process module is automatically programmed when the process module is installed in the processing station. Therefore, skilled labor is not required to install a new process module in a processing station.

Independent claims 1, 8, 19, 21, 23 and 24 have been amended to emphasize these distinctions. Accordingly, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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